



Welcome to the INVITE Churchwide Campaign!

Week Two: Nurture a Relationship

1 Thessalonians 2:8 (NIV)
“We loved you so much that
we were delighted to share with you
not only the gospel of God
but our lives as well,
because you had become so dear to us.”

Luke 5:27-32 (NIV), “Then Levi held a great banquet for Jesus at his house, and a large crowd of tax collectors and others were eating with them. But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law who belonged to their sect complained to *his disciples*, ‘Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?’

Why do *you* spend time with people far from God?
Three responses:

“I don’t”

“I just want to blend in”

“I want to be where Jesus is”



Describe the ways others have influenced you through your relationship with them. In other words, how have others influenced things like the music you enjoy, the sports teams you follow, your decision to choose a particular afterschool activity, college, or career?

Today is the second week in our study through the “INVITE Strategy.” We’re learning how to connect with others so they might connect with Jesus. Complete the following blanks:

I _____ your THEMs
N _____ a relationship with THEM
Verify their spiritual condition
Involve THEM with your church family
Tell THEM your story
Encourage THEM to cross the line of faith

Last week, the key word from Scripture was “look” (John 4:35). This week, the key word from Scripture is “love” (1 Thessalonians 2:8).

Read 1 Thessalonians 2:8 and John 3:16 and answer the following question:

What word do these verses have in common?

How does the word “so” enhance this word in these verses? (“so much,” “so loved”)

How should *God’s* love for our world (John 3:16) lead to *our* love for our world (1 Thessalonians 2:8)?

Why and how is sharing life with people who need Jesus an act of sacrifice motivated by love?

Read Luke 5:29-32. What question was posed to Jesus’ disciples?

If you were asked the question the disciples were asked (“Why do you spend time with people far from God?”), there are only 3 responses: “I don’t,” “I enjoy their sins,” and “I want to be where Jesus is.”

First Answer: “I don’t”

Here are four objections many Christians have against building significant relationships with non-believers. As you discuss these four objections, answer two questions: Which of these four barriers do you struggle with the most? And, how would you use the scriptures provided in the parentheses to overcome each barrier?

- ❖ “I think the Bible forbids friendships with non-believers.” (Read John 17:15-18)
- ❖ “I’ll be influenced by their bad behavior instead of influencing them for good.” (Read Matthew 5:13-14)
- ❖ “I’m worried about what other people will think if they see me enjoying friendship with non-believers.” (Read Luke 7:34)
- ❖ “I don’t like the language, likes, and lifestyles of the nonbelievers I know.” (Read 1 Corinthians 9:19)

Second Answer: “I just want to blend in”

While some Christians don’t spend any time with non-believers, other Christians spend time with non-believers for the wrong reason. We just want to go along and be accepted.

Name some of the unbiblical convictions or behaviors Christians might adopt out of a desire to just blend in with their peers.

Why is the desire to blend in such a strong desire?

According to John 17:15-18, *where* we should be must not define *whom* we should be. So, what is our *identity* and where should we *live out* this identity?

Third Answer: "I just want to be where Jesus is"

There's a chorus we sing sometimes:

*I just want to be where you are
Dwelling daily in your presence
I don't want to worship from afar
Draw me near to where you are.*

If that is our desire, to just be where Jesus is, based on today's main text (Luke 5:29-32), where is Jesus?

In what ways can we grow *closer* to Jesus by spending time with those *far* from Jesus?

The easiest way to nurture a relationship with a THEM is to do what you like and include THEM when you do it. As a group, list 10 favorite activities you enjoy doing. Then explain how you can nurture a relationship with a THEM in any of these activities.



Close with praise reports and prayer requests